

Message Text

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43

ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 AEC-11 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10

IO-12 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 RSC-01 GAC-01 SCEM-02 RSR-01

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FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9544

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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DEPT ALSO PASS ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, EMIN, PK

SUBJECT: URANIUM ORE DEPOSITS IN PUNJAB

REF: ISLAMABAD 3298; USUN A-2615, OCT 17, 1969

1. ACCORDING TO MOHAMMED ASLAM, DIRECTOR OF ATOMIC ENERGY MINERALS CENTER (ADSC), LAHORE, URANIUM ORE DEPOSITS REPORTED REFTTEL ARE LOCATED NEAR VILLAGE OF BAGHALCHURE APPROXIMATELY 25 MILES WEST-NORTHWEST OF TOWN OF DERA GHAZI KHAN, WHICH LOCATED IN PUNJAB PROVINCE ON WEST BANK OF INDUS. SIZE OF THIS LOW GRADE URANIUM ORE DEPOSIT NOT YET KNOWN BUT ASLAM SAID IT NOT ESPECIALLY UNUSUAL, BEING SIMILAR TO MANY SUCH DEPOSITS FOUND IN WESTERN U. S. AND OTHER PARTS OF WORLD.

2. ADVISORS FROM UNDP CAME TO LAHORE IN JUNE 1971 FOR TWO YEARS OF EXPLORATORY WORK DESIGNED TO EVALUATE DEPOSIT. THEY WERE EVACUATED DURING INDO-PAK WAR OF DECEMBER 1971 AND THEREFORE LOST ONE YEAR (BECAUSE OF EXTREME HEAT IN SUMMER, ACTIVE FIELD OPERATIONS MUST BE DONE PRIMARILY IN WINTER). UNDP IS UTILIZING JEEP MOUNTED RADIOMETRICS AND
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HAS ALSO MADE 98 SHALLOW BORINGS BUT INFORMATION GATHERED TO DATE INSUFFICIENT TO GIVE CLEAR PICTURE OF DEPOSIT. WSLAM HAS REQUESTED EXTENSION OF UNDP CONTRACT BY ONE YEAR FROM JUNE 1973 TO ALLOW COMPLETION OF WORK INITIALLY VISUALIZED (SEE USUN A-2615).

3. AEMC IS NOW PRODUCING YELLOW CAKE FROM ORE, WHICH IS METATYUYAMUNITE DISTRIBUTED VERY FINELY (1 MICRON PARTICLES) IN SIWALIK SANDSTONES. BY LIQUID LEACH EXTRACTION PROCESS, USING SULFURIC ACID RATHER THAN NITRIC ACID BECAUSE FORMER PRODUCED IN PAKISTAN, AEMC HAS DETERMINED THAT URANIUM CONTENT OF ORE SO FAR TREATED RANGES FROM 0.09 TO 0.15 PERCENT. ASLAM STATED EXTRACTION STUDIES NOT YET JUSTIFIED BY PROGRESS OF FIELD WORK BUT BEGUN PREMATURELY BECAUSE OF UNDER- UTILIZATION OF HIS CHEMICAL ENGINEERING DIVISION.

4. AEMC STUDY (AIR POUCH TO NEA/ PAB) PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER 1972 CONCLUDED THAT YELLOW CAKE MET INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDED IN- COUNTRY FABRICATION OF PILOT PLANT DESIGNED TO PROCESS 3,000 POUNDS OF ORE PER DAY. ASLAM SAID THIS RECOMMENDATION ALSO PREMATURE. YELLOW CAKE NEEDED FURTHER TESTING BEFORE ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT MADE. AEMC DIRECTOR SAID HE NOT AT ALL SURE PROCESSING OF BAGHAGOHURE ORE WOULD PROVE COMMERCIALLY ECONOMIC OPERATION.

5. ASLAM STATED THAT U. S. AEC HAD FURNISHED EXPERIENCED GEOLOGIST SEVERAL YEARS AGO WHO HAD BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE IN TRAINING AEMC SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICIANS. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT AEC WOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE ITS EXPERTISE AND ADVICE AVAILABLE TO AEMC IF PRESENT STUDIES INDICATE IT ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE TO EXPLOIT BAGHALCHURE ORE BUT ADDED THAT AEC ASSISTANCE AT PRESENT WOULD BE PREMATURE.

6. COMMENT: WE FEEL CONFIDENT CONGEN HAS SUBMITTED EARLIER REPORTS ON BAGHALCHURE ORE, BUT ALL CLASSIFIED FILES WERE DESTROYED DURING DECEMBER 1971 WAR AND WE UNABLE TO PROVIDE REFERENCES. AEC FILES MAY CONTAIN INFORMATION ON EARLIER RELATIONSHIP WITH AEMC. WE WILL MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH AEMC AND UNDP REPRESENTATIVES AND REPORT FURTHER AS DEVELOPMENTS WARRANT.

DECONTROL DEC 31, 1975

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